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UNCLAS DHAKA 001143

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: POLICE TURN BACK MARCHERS ON AHMADIYA MOSQUE

1. (SBU) Police suppressed and controlled the Khatme Nobuyat Movement's attempt on March 11 to siege an Ahmadiya mosque in Bogra following a week of processions throughout Bangladesh demanding the BDG declare Ahmadiyas as non-Muslims. There were no arrests or injuries.

2. (SBU) On March 13, Ahmadiya leaders told police that 8,000 people -- including many madrassah students bussed or trucked in from neighboring areas -- surrounded the mosque hoping to replace the existing "Ahmadiya Mosque" signboard with "A place of worship by Kadianis in Bogra town" sign. The demonstrators called on police to go into the mosque and seize Ahmadiyya publications and books. While the police did not take any publications, they did put up the sign the marchers brought to appease the crowd. After a few hours the police took the sign down.

3. (SBU) The Ahmadiya leaders remarked that police now seem less assertive in protecting Ahmadiyas and their mosques. The police officer in charge in Bogra reportedly apologized and expressed helplessness in fully protecting Ahmadiyas to explain why he caved into the pressure of hanging up the sign.

4. (SBU) When asked why Bogra was targeted for this attempted siege, Ahmadiya leaders voiced uncertainty. One leader speculated, however, that since the mosque is well situated in town, interest in its valuable real estate could be a reason. They characterized the Ahmadiya community in Bogra as small, with only about 150 members.

5. (SBU) Comment: The good news is that the police have again stopped extremists from seizing an Ahmadiya mosque. However, Ahmadiya leaders continue to assert that anti-Ahmadiya activists enjoy BDG backing. They also reject Law Minister Ahmed's recent characterization of anti-Ahmadiya attacks as sporadic and not representative of prevailing Bangladeshi tolerance. We will continue to press the BDG to protect the rights and property of Ahmadiyas and all other Bangladeshis.
THOMAS